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## Medical College of Wisconsin selects consultant for central city project

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The Medical College of Wisconsin hired Milwaukee real estate developer Kevin Newell's Royal Capital Group as site-selection consultant for a sizable facility in downtown Milwaukee or the city's near north side that will house an initiative "to help shape Milwaukee as one of the healthiest and safest cities in the nation."

Royal Capital Group, of Milwaukee, was one of 17 companies that replied to a Medical College invitation for proposals issued in early January for the Center for Flourishing Lives initiative. The initiative tackles the seemingly intractable reasons for health disparities between central city residents and suburbanites.



Medical College of Wisconsin

Royal Capital Group will provide real estate planning and development services related to the Center for Flourishing Lives project as a real estate planning and consulting partner, said Greg Wesley, a senior vice president at the Wauwatosa-based Medical College.

"We believe that Royal Capital was the best fit for this phase of our work," Wesley said in a Thursday interview with the Milwaukee Business Journal. "They have an understanding of our long-term vision in terms of the community and real estate impact."

The Medical College plans to develop a 100,000- to 150,000-square-foot structure. The facility can consist of new construction or the renovation of a historic or modern structure, according to the request for proposals. The Medical College is not specifying a dollar amount for the project.

The site-selection area runs from Interstate 94 on the south to Capitol Drive on the north, North 27th Street on the west and either North Water Street or North First Street on the east.

Newell's bid for the consulting work includes team members besides Newell, but Wesley declined to disclose their identities.

Royal Capital has been increasingly active in real estate development in Milwaukee and Madison in recent years.

Among the most high-profile projects is Royal Capital's selection by the Milwaukee Bucks to develop an apartment complex in the new downtown arena district. Groundbreaking on the project has yet to be scheduled. Royal Capital is also the developer of a 90-unit building called The Flats at Grandview Common in Madison, which received a \$5.4 million equity investment from UnitedHealthcare.

Medical College leaders anticipate Royal Capital will deliver an assessment for a governance strategy at the new facility and will engage in "a really inclusive real estate process," Wesley said.

"We felt they best displayed an understanding of how to engage our internal and external constituencies," Wesley said.

The Medical College of Wisconsin will rely on Royal Capital this month and in April to explore partnerships, hold civic engagement meetings and forums, perform conceptual programming and develop options for locations. By May, the college plans to select a preferred location, establish a budget and determine ownership of the facility.

In June, the schedule calls for making a recommendation to the MCW board of trustees based on the work of Royal Capital.

“We’re still moving aggressively on our time line,” Wesley said.

If the Medical College’s Center for Flourishing Lives initiative can impact the socio-economic causes of health disparities, the big-picture result could benefit the entire community by making the city more attractive to outside employers, Wesley said.

Medical College of Wisconsin president and CEO Dr. John Raymond said in a January interview that the root causes of health disparities mostly aren’t health issues.

“They’re social issues — education, transportation, housing, employment, incarceration and the stigma that comes with incarceration; having living-wage jobs,” he said.

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